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THE FLOATING BRIDGE.

A LEGEND OF JAPAN.

Dear friends, lend your hearts to a tale that is true,
Of beautiful isles in a sea that is blue,
Called "The Sun-Rise Kingdom," "The Great Ji-pun,"
And "The Land of the Gods" and "The Source of the Sun."

Where Nature as fierce in her fretful moods
As a tiger that springs from his lair in the woods
—To blast and to burn with her mountains aflame,
Tornadoes and tempests, no mortal can tame,
Repenting her wrath, with a gentle hand
Spreads a garment of beauty over the land
They, seeing this Nature, so swift and so strong
And beautiful—worshipped, not knowing the wrong,
They knelt to their Kami, their gods, multiform,
Their gods of the sea and the earth and the storm.
Sosanoo, the Ruler over the seas,
Who trampled the fields and pulled up the trees,
And dried up the sea and the rivers—in play
To the "god of Wild Fire" and the "god of the Clay."
And these were the gods they sought in their need:—
These forces of Nature—what did they heed?

The Heaven of old, very near had been,
And ever a bridge was floating between,

Where footsteps divine came down from the sky
Passing over the bridge, as it floated near by.

But the Heaven and earth (so the story ran)—
That had almost met at the fair Japan

Had drifted apart, and no more was seen
The beautiful bridge that floated between.

No feet ever came from the radiant shore,
No glimmer of light from casement or door.

Thro' the mists of Shinto, the dream of Buddh
They grope for the shine where the shadows brood.

O tell them that Heaven is still but a span
Away from the beautiful land of Japan.

But not to be won and not to be wooed
Thro' the mists of Shinto, the dream of Buddh.

And tell them the Bridge is still floating near;
It is true and strong and they need not fear.

And tell them, their feet they may safely trust,
For the beautiful Bridge is not built on the dust,

But its arches are set in the vaulted sky,
Tho' it bends to the Earth and comes very nigh.—

This wonderful Bridge that taketh no toll
For bearing the weight of a human soul.

—*Maria Louise Eve.*

A MINISTERS' PEACE SOCIETY.

A subject that attracts far less attention from our pulpits than it ought is that of Peace. Since the War for the Union the old interest in the cause of peace that was so active among many of our ministers has greatly declined. It is time efforts were made to revive it. We are glad to see, therefore, that the professors and students of the Meadville Theological School have formed a Ministers' Peace Society, with this end in view. Its constitution declares:

"The society, resting on the principle that war is contrary to the spirit of Christianity, shall have for its

object to show the pernicious effects of war, to increase the preaching of ministers against the evil, and to try, by all proper means, to arouse the interest of the people in all efforts for the promotion of peace.

"All ministers or theological students who agree to preach upon the subject at least once a year, as long as they are occupants of pulpits, may become members of this society."

The secretary of the society sends out a circular which still further explains the aims in view. We quote: "There seemed to be need that such an organization should be instituted in order to revive the now largely discontinued custom of preaching on the subject of peace.

"The plan is essentially that of earlier societies.

"Although arbitration and other methods of peaceful settlement of international troubles are, happily, becoming more common, it must be clear to all that the subject represented by this society still is and long will be a living issue. It is, further, a matter peculiarly suited to occasional treatment by ministers, as proposed in the constitution. If they will use their influence in time of peace, much will be done toward creating a rational public sentiment against war. In this nation, at this time, to strengthen the sentiment is as important as ever. Our country is made up of such a mixed population, including those who have brought with them from fatherlands and mother countries various views as to methods of government, that it is important to have national life tempered by a calm public opinion concerning this subject.

"The great stress now laid upon military affairs by European nations shows how much must be done before men can be brought fully to realize the importance of settling international questions rationally, according to the rules of justice.

"So the 'Ministers' Peace Society' sets forth, hoping to be enlarged by the membership of many preachers of our country, of all denominations; and trusting that, by means of the annual sermon, devoted to the high purpose of advancing men to broad-minded and steadfast principles of brotherhood, the organization will prove to be of real service to mankind."

The annual meeting of the society is held each year in Meadville during the week of commencement exercises of the Theological School. All ministers are invited to join. For further information send to Frank W. Pratt, Meadville, Pa.—*The Unitarian.*

PAYING FOR WAR.

We hear much about the enormous and almost insupportable burdens imposed upon the peoples of Europe in the maintenance of their great standing armies. Austria maintains a standing army of 271,566 men at an annual cost of \$55,116,248. France maintains a standing army of 541,472 men at an annual cost of \$111,689,400. Great Britain maintains a regular army of 149,667 men at an annual cost of \$83,515,640. Russia maintains a standing army of 871,764 men at an annual cost of \$131,649,250.

Our regular Army costs us \$38,522,436. Add that to our pension expenditures, and what may be termed the military establishment of the United States will cost us from \$135,000,000 to \$140,000,000 for the current year. I do not see wherein we have occasion to pecuniarily congratulate ourselves or bemoan the unhappy fate of others.